

The Office of Inspector General (OIG), Department of Defense (DoD), announced today that on April 28, 2000, Central Ambulance Service (CAS), Coraopolis, PA; Anthony J. Sanvito, President, CAS; and Margaret M. Sanvito, director of billing, CAS were each sentenced in United States District Court (USDC), Western District of Pennsylvania (WDPA), Pittsburgh, PA by Federal District Judge Gary L. Lancaster. CAS received 1-year probation. Anthony J. Sanvito, was ordered to pay \$350,000 in restitution, was order to pay a \$5,000 fine, and sentenced to 6-months home detention, and was ordered to serve 250 hours of community service and a life time band from doing business with Medicare, Medicaid and TRICARE. Margaret M. Sanvito, was sentenced to 12-months plus 1-day of confinement, and was ordered to serve 3-years of supervised probation and a life time band from doing business with Medicare, Medicaid and TRICARE.

These sentences resulted from the filing of a criminal information on September 17, 1999, charging CAS with one-count of conspiracy to defraud the Government with respect to claims and one-count of health care fraud. The information also charged Anthony J. Sanvito and his wife Margaret M. Sanvito with one-count each of conspiracy to defraud the Government with respect to claims.

On this same date, CAS and the Sanvitos entered guilty pleas to the charges contained in the criminal information, before Judge Lancaster. In their plea agreements, CAS and the Sanvitos also consented to civil forfeiture complaints, which were filed on July 31, 1997 and February 4, 1998 respectively. These forfeitures included all of the corporate assets of CAS and certain real estate valued at \$1,835,316. In addition to the forfeiture amount, On December 20, 1999, CAS and the Sanvitos agreed to a civil settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice in the amount of \$150,000.

According to the criminal information and civil settlement agreement, the Government alleges that during the period of 1995 until 1997, CAS, Anthony J. Sanvito, and Margaret M. Sanvito, knowingly submitted false and fraudulent claims for ambulance transports to TRICARE, Medicare and Medicaid. The claims submitted by CAS and the Sanvitos represented that the transported patients were either bed-ridden or bed-confined, when in fact, they were not. In furtherance of the scheme, the Sanvitos instructed CAS paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to omit certain words from their ambulance transport records. These words accurately described the patient's physical condition at the time of transport, and

included terms such as: "standing", "sitting", "walking",
"chair", and/or "ambulatory".